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Thanks. To Greg Holyk – I look at what you've accomplished since our years together, and I think about all the younger people scattered throughout our profession whom I've had the pleasure to work with in their early careers, and I have to recognize that without me, you know... you'd have been so much happier. It's said I can be a picky bastard. It's great to know that some of it was useful.

As for Jon, it's amazing to sit there and listen to Jon Krosnick say good things about you. Academics aren't supposed to do that. In fact, I saw Bob Shapiro scribbling reviewer notes as you talked, Jon, and I think you're going to be lucky to get a revise and resubmit out of this.

Truth is I've been standing on Jon's shoulders for so long we could get work as a circus act. More in a minute about what we practitioners can learned from our academic peers but first just thanks. I'm so honored to receive this recognition and so flattered that you would choose to give it to a young, striving, mid-career researcher such as myself. A veritable ingenue in the field. And here I thought this kind of thing was for old farts. Clearly not.

As evidence of my delight and as an attempt to demonstrate that pollsters are people too I've brought my family this evening. My wife Yulia, my mom Judith – the other Judith Langer – and my daughters Eliana and Gavriela. These are the stars in my sky, the bounce in my step and the selections with certainty in my sample frame. Love you guys.

Well, I got into this line of work the old-fashioned way, which is by complete accident. I was a reporter at The Associated Press working on a story one day when I stumbled on the amazing revelation that if you divide the small number by the big number, you get the percentage. This qualified me among my fellow reporters as a high-level statistician. And before long I was running the little – at the time – AP poll, in between plane crashes, train wrecks and three-alarm fires.

I've had many a grizzled newsman waggle a finger at me and intone that polling is not a substitute for reporting. To the contrary, I quickly learned that good polling *is* good reporting. The process of being a survey researcher and of being a news reporter really are very close to the same thing. We go to our best sources, ask our best questions, write down what they tell us and report what we found out. The main difference is that in polling we don't get to purposefully pick and choose our sources – we have to select them randomly, which is absolutely terrifying.

But what we're after, in both cases, is the story. Forget that as a researcher and you end up burying your audience in a mass grave of numbers and percentage signs. Our reportorial skills – researching our topic, selecting our methods, writing our questions, collecting our information, analyzing it, adding context, telling the story – are critical to what we do. No research project should have anything routine about it. We're not just moving numbers from point A to point B like sheetrock off the back of a truck. We elevate information into intelligence by adding insight. That's the essential creative element of our work.

It's often said that polling is a snapshot in time. That's a characterization I've always rejected. Because if you look it up, a snapshot is "a casual photograph taken by an amateur." Our work isn't, or shouldn't be, casual or amateurish. I think of it as a portrait of public attitudes and behavior, crafted with all the care, skill and concentration that term implies.

My next realization as I dug into this work was that I was a complete idiot. I think that in his questionnaire-writing workshops Jon still uses some howlingly bad questions I wrote decades ago. What I saw and loved about this field is that there is so much to learn, and there are so many learned colleagues willing to help. Back when I was president of this chapter, among our sessions was one at which we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the publication of the seminal book *Questions and Answers in Attitude Surveys* – with both its authors making the trip to New York to participate, Stanley Presser from Maryland and Howard Schuman from his home in Maine. That one was a wow.

And more broadly – the professional development opportunities offered by NYAAPOR and all the chapters, and of course the annual national AAPOR conference. The idea-sharing among colleagues that builds into lasting friendships, like mine with Jon that I treasure so much. Reading and learning from the literature. Trial and error, too. It's all about the acquisition of knowledge that leads us to the ability to make informed, independent judgments about our practice of our profession. Equally as essential as the creativity piece.

The last element I want to mention is about integrity in research. We can have the creative skills. We can have the drive to develop and sustain the knowledge base that informs good judgment. But we also need the commitment – and sometimes the fortitude – to exercise that judgment, independently and with integrity.

In a world where "fit for purpose" may mean "anything goes," we have to ask ourselves – do the methods I'm using and the data I've gathered truly support the research claims I'm making? If a client's budget requires shortcuts that we know to be suboptimal – do we acquiesce, or do we raise the yellow or red flag? If an employer's or a client's demands for questionnaire design or expectations for analytical outcomes push beyond what we know to be best practices – are we ready to blow the whistle, and to explain and defend our reasons why?

I say we have to. Data speak with authority. We as researchers are entrusted with ensuring that that authority is earned – that it's justified by adherence to appropriate methods and practices, accompanied by full disclosure. That's how we discharge our responsibility to our clients, to our field, and I daresay, to ourselves.

So: developing our creative skills. Building the knowledge base that leads to informed judgment. Exercising that judgment with integrity, even when it would be so much easier to cut our conscience to fit today's fashion. These are the foundations of our work that got me so excited when I stumbled into this field nearly 40 years ago. I'm as fired up and raring to go today as I was then, so grateful for your recognition this evening, and so confident in our shared commitment to carry forward the work we do with creativity; with informed, independent judgment; and with integrity.

Thank you very much.